

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

---

*PRINTED BY ORDER OF PARLIAMENT*



OTTAWA  
J. DE LABROQUERIE TACHÉ  
PRINTER TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY  
1918

[No. 58—1918.]

OTTAWA, March 20, 1918.

*To the Advisory Committee of Council on Governmental Publications:*

GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with the desire of Parliament, as expressed last session, the Editorial Committee has the honour to submit the report of its operations from the date of its appointment, on October 4, 1917, up to the present time.

The Order in Council appointing the committee reads as follows:—

P. C. 2729

*Certified Copy of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General, on the 4th October, 1917.*

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 21st September, 1917, from the Right Honourable Sir George E. Foster, calling attention to the attached reports of the Joint Committee of both Houses on the printing of Parliament, presented on September 12, 1917, in which observations and suggestions are made with regard to the printing of public documents and the possibility of a better co-ordination and lessening of expenditure in connection therewith.

The report suggests, among other things, the establishing of an Editorial Board, consisting of three members of the Civil Service thoroughly conversant with public affairs and with a knowledge of departmental workings, with certain powers as detailed therein.

The Prime Minister, in speaking to this report, commended the purpose had in view by the committee and expressed the intention of the Government to deal with the matter, either by adopting the report as presented or by modifying it to the extent of associating two or three members of the Government with the members of the suggested Editorial Committee.

The Minister recommends that a committee of three members of the Civil Service be appointed to consider the suggestions of the Joint Committee on Printing and take such action as may contribute to the better co-ordination in the preparation for and printing of public documents and their subsequent distribution, so that the greatest possible economy may be attained, consistent with the public interest, and that three members of the Government be constituted a committee to advise and co-operate with the said Editorial Committee, and whose approval shall be obtained to all measures recommended by that committee before they are put into execution.

The Minister recommends that the following constitute the Editorial Committee:—

Fred Cook, Assistant King's Printer;

F. C. T. O'Hara, Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce; and

Francis C. C. Lynch, of the Department of the Interior;

and that

The Rt. Hon. Sir George E. Foster.

Hon. Arthur Meighen, and

Hon. M. Burrell

be the Committee of the Privy Council for the purpose above named.

The Committee concur in the foregoing and submit the same for approval.

RODOLPHE BOUDREAU,

*Clerk of the Privy Council.*

## SESSIONAL PAPER No. 58

In order to make the preparation of reports easier for the public departments, and especially to secure uniformity and economy, the first action of the Editorial Committee was to draw up a set of "suggestions," based upon British, Canadian, and American experience. They were submitted to Council on October 23, and duly approved. These "suggestions" are:—

(a) "Copy" should be carefully edited before, and not after, it reaches the Printing Bureau. In the past, as the Joint Committee on the Printing of Parliament has pointed out, thousands of dollars have been wasted by "authors' corrections."

(b) Annual reports should be confined to concise accounts of the work of the several departments during the period covered by the reports, eliminating unimportant matters, including those of purely local interest.

(c) Contributions to knowledge, in the form of scientific treatises and general discussion, should have no place in an annual report. Observance of this rule would exclude an immense quantity of matter, as now printed.

(d) Illustrations in annual reports should be dispensed with, except maps or diagrams required for the better understanding of the text.

(e) Biographical and eulogistic matter relating to the past or present personnel of the office should be rigorously excluded.

(f) The annual statements of officers who do not report directly to the head of an executive department should not be printed, but be summarized in the report of the Deputy Minister.

(g) Letters of transmission, except the one from the Deputy Minister, and from the Minister to His Excellency, should not appear in the annual report. In the past, instances have occurred where eight pages of print have been taken up uselessly in this way.

(h) The repetition of the same information, year after year, should be avoided.

(i) Trivial details in connection with the administration of public lands, Indian bands, prisons, public works, etc., should be eliminated.

(j) Maps should be sparingly used. Thousands of dollars of public money have been literally thrown away in the past by the overprinting of maps.

(k) The "padding" of reports by quotations from newspapers and other publications should be avoided.

(l) Statistical matter of each department, except the Census and Statistics Office, should relate strictly to the administrative work of the department itself, as explanatory or illustrative of the department's own activities.

(m) Lists of departmental officials and changes in departmental staffs are out of place in annual reports, as they are simply duplications of information appearing in the Civil Service List or Auditor General's Report.

(n) For the purposes of the annual record, the formal introduction and signature "I have the honour to submit herewith my annual report, etc." and "I have the honour to be, sir, etc." will be dropped, and this form substituted: "John Doe, Dominion Lands Agent at Grande Prairie, Alberta, reports as follows."

(o) "Copy" for the printer should be typewritten. Only in exceptional cases, such as the preparation of statistics, may this rule be departed from.

It must be borne in mind that although prompt action was taken by the Governor in Council, after prorogation, to carry out the wishes of Parliament for the appointment of an Editorial Board, the late period to which the two Houses sat, September 20, prevented the Editorial Committee from dealing with many departmental reports, the printing of which was already far advanced at the Printing Bureau.

8 GEORGE V, A. 1918

Conscious of the fact that there has been great waste in the distribution of public documents in the past, the Editorial Committee had a careful compilation made of the requirements of Parliament, the departments, and the public generally, and, on the strength of the information secured, the committee recommended reductions in the editions of reports of the several departments, aggregating many thousands of volumes.

During the five months the Editorial Committee has been at work it has reviewed a large number of manuscripts, has held many meetings, and has interviewed numerous officials in the public service, who are more or less responsible for the submission of "copy" to the King's Printer.

In cases where the committee was in doubt, the best scientific or technical aid was invoked, and the committee desires to express its deep obligations to the many gentlemen of different professions, both of the Civil Service and outside, who have cheerfully aided the committee by their counsel.

While officers charged with the preparation of governmental publications have concurred in the view that there has been considerable waste in the printing of reports, yet in many instances they insisted that the specific manuscript in which they were interested was one of value, and should not be interfered with. Repeatedly it was urged by them that precedent should govern. Because a certain line of action regarding the contents of publications had prevailed since Confederation, they argued that there should be no change. In some instances your committee has had to report in favour of deleting useless matter from certain reports simply because the responsible officer was not disposed to accept the committee's suggestions. In the majority of cases, however, Deputy Ministers and other officials have manifested the keenest interest in the work of the committee, and have heartily co-operated to effect economies. The appearance of the majority of the blue-books, to be submitted to Parliament this session, is a striking exemplification of what has been accomplished by a careful editorial supervision.

The following table shows the reductions in the number of copies of English and French reports. In fairness, however, to the various departments interested, it should be stated that the excess number of reports issued in the past was mainly caused by the unnecessarily large numbers of publications ordered by Parliament for the official parliamentary distribution list. The apparent disparity in the reductions of the French editions, as compared with the English, is due to the fact that the number of French copies printed is much smaller than English:

Report.	Copies reduced.	
	English.	French.
Auditor General.....	860	combined.
Public Accounts.....	900	100
Trade and Commerce (seven parts).....	3,000	175
Trade and Navigation.....	2,000	150
Agricultural Instruction.....	3,300	125
Experimental Farms.....	5,000	950
Public Works.....	1,150	150
Railways and Canals.....	1,200	175
Canal Statistics.....	1,500	175
Railway Statistics.....	1,000	100
List of Shareholders of Chartered Banks.....	suspended.	suspended.
Railway Commission.....	1,500	100
Telephone Statistics.....	1,200	125
Express Statistics.....	suspended.	suspended.
Telegraph Statistics.....	1,400	100
Criminal Statistics.....	1,500	combined.
Steamboat Inspection.....	1,500	combined.
Marine.....	1,100	100
List of Vessels.....	900	combined.
Postmaster General.....	900	125

## SESSIONAL PAPER No. 58

Report.	Copies reduced.	
	English.	French.
Interior.....	500	100
Topographical Survey ..	1,200	500
Geological Survey.....	700	60
Mines.....	800	50
Unclaimed Bank Balances.....	suspended.	suspended.
Indian Affairs.....	800	80
Mounted Police.....	500	75
Secretary of State.....	1,625	100
Archives.....	1,000	200
Civil Service List.....	2,100	combined.
Public Printing and Stationery.....	1,200	100
External Affairs.....	1,000	125
Militia Council.....	800	100
Labour.....	1,900	150
Naval Service.....	100	150
Canadian Biology.....	500	150
Fisheries.....	200	250

The three reports of the Department of Inland Revenue, the reports of the Departments of Agriculture, Mines, Naval Service, and Fisheries were printed before the Editorial Committee took up its work. During the coming year the editions of the Inland Revenue reports will be reduced by 3,500 copies, and Agriculture by 1,000.

In past years there has been much waste in the distribution of the bound Sessional Papers. The complete set ranges from twenty-five to thirty-two volumes annually. Despite repeated protests of Senators and Members, the practice prevailed for several years of sending all these volumes to each member of Parliament. In addition, the books have been forwarded to many organizations which either had no use for them, or could not find accommodation for them. By means of the notification post-card system, which is now being generally followed by the Department of Public Printing and some other departments, it is possible to arrive at a fairly accurate estimate of the public requirements. Instead of binding 600 sets, therefore, as last year, your committee suggested that the number be 350 sets in English, a saving of 7,500 bound volumes, and 150 sets in French, a reduction of 1,500 volumes. The Governor in Council approved of this recommendation.

Your committee also carefully examined the mailing list for the Dominion statutes, and realizing the great waste in distribution that had existed for years, recommended to Council the elimination of 1,500 copies in English and 700 copies in French. This suggestion was approved, and your committee can congratulate itself that not a single complaint has been received since this action was taken. On this one item alone, the saving was approximately \$5,500.

The committee has faithfully carried out the instruction of Parliament to consolidate the two editions of the Auditor General's report, thereby effecting a saving of \$30,000. The committee trusts that the arrangement of the matter will commend itself to the Senate and House of Commons. After making careful allowances for distribution and prospective demand, it was possible, even with the consolidation, to reduce the size of the edition. That some action in this direction was necessary is evidenced by the fact that last year there was a surplus of 2,008 sets of the Auditor General's report (each set consisting of four volumes), representing a wastage of over ten tons of paper, a loss to the country on this one item of \$2,500. It is but fair to the Auditor General to say that he can hardly be held responsible for this loss. The fault rather lies at the doors of Parliament, which years ago adopted the rule of printing from 1,800 to 2,750 copies in English and from 200 to 250 copies in French of every report.

8 GEORGE V, A. 1918

Your committee has given careful consideration to the recommendation of the "Joint Committee on the Printing of Parliament" regarding the duplication of the publication of statistical data by the Departments of Trade and Commerce and Customs, and has made certain suggestions whereby it is hoped this can be avoided in future. The question is now under consideration by the heads of the departments concerned.

The following brief summary of work accomplished may be of interest:—

Monthly Bulletin of Sea Fishery Statistics, English, cancelled.

"Investigations into Six Lignite Samples obtained from the Province of Alberta," French, cancelled.

Militia List of Canada, English, quarterly issue cancelled and semi-annual issue substituted. This change, with reduction in the text, will save nearly \$20,000 annually.

"Iroquois Foods and Food Preparations," French, cancelled.

Report of Western Canada Irrigation Association, English, cancelled after this year. Cost of last issue reduced, effecting a saving of \$1,350.

Militia Nominal Rolls, English, averaging \$750 each issue, cancelled.

"Weathering of Coal," French, cancelled.

List of Canadian Government Ships, English, cancelled.

Casualty Lists, English, averaging \$2,000 each monthly issue, cancelled.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Resources of Canada, French, cancelled.

List of Standard Stock kept at the Dominion Lighthouse Depot, Prescott, English, cancelled.

"Victoria and Saanich Map Areas, British Columbia," French, cancelled.

"Proclamations, Orders in Council, and Documents relating to the European War," English and French editions, cancelled, saving \$70,000.

"Geology of Tazin and Taltson rivers, Yukon," French, cancelled.

"Feeds and Feeding Stuffs," English and French, cancelled.

Technical bulletin on Potato growing, 14,000 copies in English and French cancelled, and replaced by a popular edition in both languages.

The following is the record, in part, of the reductions in the text of departmental reports:—

Report.	Pages reduced.	Report.	Pages reduced.
Auditor General.....	2,734	Public Works.....	600
Public Accounts.....	16	Indian Affairs .....	350
Agricultural Instruction .....	48	Labour.....	82
Experimental Farms .....	1,452	Interior. ....	112
Mounted Police.....	386	Railway Commission.....	300
Naval Service.....	268	Secretary of State.....	50
Adulteration of Food .....	502	Railways and Canals.....	390
Penitentiaries.....	72	External Affairs.....	50
Civil Service Commission .....	50	Monthly Weather Bulletin.....	50

The reports still to come will show considerable reductions in the text.

Although not specially charged with the duty of reporting upon the stationery used in the public departments, yet, as in the course of its investigations it became apparent that great waste prevailed by the use of high-grade papers, your committee felt it its duty to call the attention of the Sub-Committee of Council to the matter.

## SESSIONAL PAPER No. 58

While the Editorial Committee has not by any means completed its researches upon this subject, it is gratifying to know that the recommendations already submitted have been approved by the Government. If these suggestions be faithfully carried out, your committee believes that a great saving will result.

In this connection special reference may be made to the work of the United States Bureau of Efficiency which, by invitation, places investigators in the public departments at Washington. These gentlemen, after careful enquiry, offer suggestions for the improvement of departmental methods in the keeping of accounts, the filing of documents, the use of form blanks, etc. As the result of a systematic examination of the forms used in the different departments at Washington, hundreds of superfluous ones have been cut off, while many others have been simplified. The result has been a great improvement in departmental machinery, the saving of the time of officers, and the elimination of waste.

The recommendation of your committee for the appointment of three officers in each department at Ottawa, to revise existing forms and schedules, to abolish obsolete or superfluous ones, and to standardize and improve those required for present or future use was adopted by Council, and is now obligatory upon all departments. This work has already been carried out by the Department of Marine and Fisheries and the Department of Militia and Defence, and has resulted in great simplification and economy.

In addition, upon the recommendation of the Editorial Committee, authority has been conferred by the Governor in Council on the King's Printer to determine the qualities of paper to be used, and the size and style of composition in which departmental reports are to appear. It is hoped that this suggestion will have a tendency to stop the use of very expensive papers, when cheaper grades would suffice.

Your committee has suggested an amendment to the Acts constituting some of the public departments for the purpose of freeing them from the statutory obligation to report in detail to Parliament each year. If Parliament adopts this suggestion it will afford the committee a much freer hand in its future work.

The attention of Parliament is respectfully called to the suggestion that all bodies operating either by Statute or Order in Council and expending public moneys, such as the Commission of Conservation, the Military Hospitals Commission (Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment), the Canada Food Board, the Fuel Controller, the National Art Gallery, the Honorary Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Canada Registration Board, and similar organizations, be made subject to the Act respecting Public Printing and Stationery.

Your committee has submitted a recommendation to the Sub-Committee of Council that the Debates Committee of the House of Commons should abolish the distribution of the revised edition of the Official Debates, in sheet form. In substitution therefor, it suggests the adoption next year of the recommendation of the King's Printer that as each volume of the Revised Debates, in either English or French, is completed, it be indexed, bound, and distributed, and that a complete index be included in the final volume of the Commons Debates. The advantage will be that members will receive the bound volumes of the Revised Debates of the House of Commons months earlier than at present. It will also relieve the bindery of the Government Printing Bureau of congestion at one period of the year by equitably distributing the work over several months.

Your committee would also recommend a thorough revision of the lists of persons to receive the "Daily Proceedings" of both Houses. While holding firmly the view that the Canadian people, who pay the bills, are entitled to the fullest information of the doings of their representatives, your committee is of the opinion that the present distribution list tends to great wastefulness.

8 GEORGE V, A. 1918

Your committee has further suggested the abolition of the "Analytical Index to the Debates of the House of Commons." The cost of the English edition (690 copies) is \$2 per volume, and of the French (150 copies) \$13 per volume. Careful inquiry among parliamentarians shows that the index is hardly ever used. Indeed, many members when asked as to the utility of the compilation did not even know of its existence.

The Editorial Committee, in closing the report of its work covering a period short of six months, desires to say that while possibly it may have made mistakes, it has conscientiously endeavoured to carry out the wishes of the people's representatives, and trusts that it has merited the confidence of the Government and of both Houses of Parliament. The economies effected to date through the instrumentality of the committee total approximately \$175,000, but with a clear course ahead during the coming year, and all departmental reports coming under review, the saving to the country should be much greater.

Respectfully submitted,

FRED COOK,

F. C. T. O'HARA,

F. C. C. LYNCH,

*Editorial Committee.*